

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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O 060950Z NOV 76 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5733

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KIGALI IMMEDIATE

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0622

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, PINS, PGOV, MPOL, BY

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF GAETAN NIKOBAMYE

REF: (A) STATE 272150, (B) BUJUMBURA 0971

1. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SOME OF NIKOBAMYE'S OBSERVATIONS ABOUT BURUNDI'S NEW LEADERS IN REF A ARE VALID: AFTER ALL, HE HAS HAD THE MOST INTIMATE, INSIDE LOOK AT THEM. HOWEVER, I FEEL QUITE SURE THAT HE IS WRONG IN SEEING THE HUTU-TUTSI ISSUE AS THE CENTERPIECE OF THE COUP D'ETAT. THE MESSAGE IN REF B HAS TRIED TO REVIEW MOTIVATIONS FOR THE COUP AND TO INDICATE THE PRIMARY IMMEDIATE CONCERNS OF BAGAZA AND COMPANY. THUS, EVEN IF NIKOBAMYE MAY BE RIGHT IN SAYING THAT SOME ARMY OFFICERS WERE NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH RWANDA, THE FACT IS THAT THE NEW REGIME'S FIRST MOVE IN THE FOREIGN FIELD WAS TO ASSUAGE RWANDAN ANXIETIES AND TO CONFIRM THE CONTINUATION OF THE NEW BILATERAL ENTENTE, AS WELL AS THE DESIRE TO WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY IN THE TRIPARTITE FRAMEWORK WITH ZAIRE. (BUJUMBURA 0968)

2. NIKOBAMYE CANNOT HIMSELF BE FORGETFUL OF THE GROSS INADE-  
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QUACIES OF THE MICOMBERO ADMINISTRATION. INDEED, HE SPENT

HOURS TELLING EMOFFS OF HIS FRUSTRATIONS IN GETTING MICOMBERO TO TEND TO OFFICIAL DUTIES, TO TAKE DECISIONS, TO STUDY OFFICIAL PAPERS, ETC. IT IS THAT SITUATION WHICH WAS AT THE HEART OF THE ARMY TAKEOVER.

3. WE DO NOT, OF COURSE, KNOW MUCH OF GENERAL HUTU REACTION TO THE TURNABOUT, EXCEPT THAT MISSIONARIES AND OTHERS HAVE REPORTED EVERYTHING TO BE QUIET AND NORMAL IN THE INTERIOR. OUR HUTU SERVANTS AND LOCAL EMPLOYEES SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED, BECAUSE THEY ALL FELT THE OLD GOVERNMENT TO BE OPPRESSIVE (THROUGH ITS RAPACIOUS LOCAL-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS), AND BECAUSE THEY HALF THINK, HALF HOPE THAT THE NEW RULERS WILL SOMEHOW BE BETTER. MOREOVER, WHATEVER NIKOBAMYE MAY THINK MICOMBERO WAS DOING FOR HUTU-TUTSI RECONCILIATION (WHICH COULD BE NIKOBAMYE'S SELF-JUSTIFICATION FOR SERVING THE TUTSI ESTABLISHMENT), THE FACT IS THAT PRECIOUS LITTLE WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY ANY POSITIVE ACTION OR INSPIRATION OF THE EX-PRESIDENT.

4. OUR FURTHER REVIEW OF BIO FILES INDICATES THAT MAYBE I WAS NOT QUITE ACCURATE IN SAYING IN PARA 3 OF BUJUMBURA 0953 ABOUT THE TOP THREE LEADERS THAT "ALL OF THESE MEN ARE CONSIDERED MORE OR LESS MODERATE ON ETHNIC ISSUES". IN FACT, ONLY BAGAZA IS REALLY SO CONSIDERED, WITH NZOHABONAYO AND NZAMBIMANA BOTH LISTED AS HAVING BEEN EXTREMISTS IN 1972 IN RETRIBUTION AGAINST THE HUTUS. SUCH TERMINOLOGY IS ALL RELATIVE HOWEVER, BECAUSE IN THAT GENOCIDAL YEAR, MODERATION ONLY MEANT THAT OFFICERS OF THAT VIEW MAY HAVE WANTED TO LET UP THE MASSACRES AFTER PERHAPS KILLING "ONLY" A FEW TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HUTUS INSTEAD OF GETTING TO 100,000 OR MORE. I DO NOT THINK THAT THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES GIVE US MUCH CLUE TO PRESENT ATTITUDES, WHEN, TO REPEAT, THE HUTUS HAVE BEEN AN ENTIRELY PASSIVE FACTOR, AND WHEN THE ETHNIC PROBLEM SEEMS NOT TO HAVE BEEN AMONG THE NEW LEADERS' PREOCCUPATIONS. OF COURSE, IT SHOULD BE IN THE FOREFRONT, IN A POSTIVE SENSE, AND THAT IS WHY I SPENT SO MUCH TIME REHEARSING IT WITH FATHER BARAKANA ON NOVEMBER 4 (REF B PARA 6).

5. GETTING BACK TO NIKOBAMYE AS HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM, WIFE OF EMOFF VISITED HIS WIFE (WHO IS TUTSI) NOVEMBER 5. SHE IS UNMOLESTED AND CONTINUING HER JOB IN MINISTRY OF HEALTH. SHE JOINS HER HUSBAND IN THINKING THE NEW LEADERS INGRATES, CONFIDENTIAL

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AFTER ALL THE FAVORS THAT MICOMBERO SHOWERED ON THEM, AND SHE CONSIDERS SOMEONE LIKE NZAMBINANA TO BE THE ARCHETYPE OF A TUTSI, CONVINCED OF HIS ETHNIC SUPERIORITY. BUT SHE SEES NO EVIDENCE OF ANY ACTIONS AGAINST HUTUS BY THE NEW REGIME. AT THE SAME TIME, SHE BELIEVES IT WOULD BE BEST FOR HER HUSBAND TO STAY ABROAD FOR THE TIME BEING. OFFICERS HAVE VISITED HER SEVERAL TIMES TO ASK FOR NEWS ABOUT NIKOBAMYE, AND THEY WOULD PROBABLY PREFER TO HAVE HIM BACK HERE. THEY MAY WELL HAVE

INSTRUCTED NZEYIMANA IN WASHINGTON TO URGE NIKOBAMYE TO RETURN.

6. WE WOULD HESITATE TO RECOMMEND THAT HE COMPLY. WHILE THE PHONES OF EX-MINISTERS HAVE BEEN CUT, AND WHILE A FEW MAY BE UNDER A SORT OF HOUSE ARREST, THE REGIME HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO ASSURE THE PUBLIC AND FOREIGN DIPLOMATS THAT NO HARM WILL BEFALL EX-MINISTERS. NIKOBAMYE WOULD PROBABLY BE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME LIGHT. NONETHELESS, IF THE NEW LEADERS CHANGE THEIR MINDS ABOUT RETRIBUTION, NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO CALL THEM TO ACCOUNT FOR BREAKING A PROMISE. MOREOVER, NIKOBAMYE IS AN UNUSUALLY SENSITIVE POSITION BECAUSE HE WAS SUCH A CLOSE CONFIDANT OF MICOMBERO AND PROBABLY KNOWS MORE DIRT AND SCANDAL THAT ANYONE ELSE IN THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE CORRUPTION OF ARMY OFFICERS. HE COULD BE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO NEW REGIME IF AT LARGE, AND THIS MAKES IT PROBABLY THE BETTER PART OF WISDOM FOR HIM TO STAY ABROAD FOR A WHILE, EVEN THOUGH SUCH A COURSE WILL FURTHER IRRITATE THE COLONELS AGAINST HIM. THAT HE COULD OCCUPY A PLACE IN ANEW CABINET (WHENEVER THAT MAY REAPPEAR), AS MIKANAGU SUGGESTS (USUN 5061) SEEMS FANCIFUL.

7. I DO NOT THINK MUCH OF THE IDEA OF ENCOURAGING HIM TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF IN BELGIUM, ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE HUTU COMMUNITY THERE (WHICH ANYWAY PROBABLY CONSIDERS HIM AN "UNCLE TOM"). THAT COMMUNITY TENDS TO BE AN AGITATIONAL GROUP WHICH HAS NO POTENTIAL FOR HELPING A SANE EVOLUTION OF AFFAIRS IN BURUNDI, HOWEVER MUCH ABSTRACT JUSTICE MAY BE ON THEIR SIDE. NIKOBAMYE'S PRESENCE AMONG THEM COULD ONLY MAKE THE FUR FLY HERE AND MIGHT REALLY FOCUS THE ATTENTION OF THE NEW LEADERS ON THE ETHNIC ISSUE. FOR THE TIME BEING, I WOULD HOPE THAT NIKOBAMYE COULD FIND FUNDS TO KEEP HIMSELF AFLOAT IN THE U.S. (HE HAS ADMITTED TO US HIS OWN GRAFT IN THE PAST, AND HE SHOULD HAVE SOME FOREIGN BANK ACCOUNT.) MIKANAGU IS HIS GOOD FRIEND, AND NIKOBAMYE SHOULD CONSULT CLOSELY WITH HIM, ALTHOUGH MIKANAGU  
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WILL BE UNDER CONTRARY PRESSURES FROM BUJUMBURA.  
MARK

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## Message Attributes

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